

ROADRUNNER RAMBLINGS

Volume 35, No. 2. Mar.-Apr. 2013

Update from the Roundhouse

by Beth Bardwell,
Audubon NM

Director of Freshwater Conservation

Here is the latest on Audubon New Mexico's freshwater legislative priorities for this year's NM legislative session.

Funding for Healthy Rivers.

Senator Phil Griego and Senator Carlos Cisneros have submitted amendments to House Bill 2, the state's funding bill, to appropriate up to \$0.5 million for projects that enhance the health of rivers by addressing the root causes of poor water quality and stream habitat losses. These amendments will be taken up in negotiations between Senate and House finance leaders, and, if supported, will appear in the Senate Finance Committee substitute bill for House Bill 2. The substitute bill could become public as early as March 8. The substitute bill will then pass out of Senate Finance and move to the Senate floor for passage and then on to the House for concurrence.

Water Leasing for Stream Flow.

Audubon made incremental, but important, progress in passing this legislation. Supporters now include the Office of the State Engineer and the Attorney General of New Mexico. Key irrigation districts are neutral. The bill's first hearing will be March 8th in the House Ag and Water Committee. Audubon and Trout Unlimited will continue to work to find ranchers who will champion this bill in 2014. Also, Audubon is looking for water rights holders who are interested in leasing their water for stream flow and willing to entertain discussions about submitting a test application to the Office of the State Engineer.

House Joint Memorial in Support of Rio Grande Environmental Management Program.

This joint memorial is a message from the state legislature to Congress to reauthorize and fund a basin-specific program to enhance fish and wildlife habitat. This memorial was unanimously passed by the NM House, and we are awaiting committee assignments in the NM Senate. At press time, committee assignments were imminent.

Thank you, Audubon chapters in New Mexico, for your interest and support. The Audubon NM State Office is looking to improve our future communication with members statewide on state legislation that benefits birds and wildlife.

La Luz and Caballo Christmas Bird Count Reports

by John Douglas

La Luz CBC. On this count in the foothill of the Sacramento Mountains north of Alamogordo, 80 species were observed. There were no big surprises, but we saw more ducks than usual and more Snow Geese than were seen on the the Caballo count. Sparrows were low in numbers, and for only the second year, we had no Steller's Jays. The woodpecker numbers were very low with only Northern Flickers in usual numbers. Many areas away from any water source had very low numbers. As a result, species numbers were "normal" but we had a low number of total individual birds tallied.

Caballo CBC. This year's total of 120 species was lower than normal but within range of what seems to be a low species year for a southern New Mexico CBC. We tallied only one Snow Goose, but had high number of Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Lesser Goldfinches. Overall, there were low number of sparrows and many seed-eating species. Although we had a high number of eagles, we had low numbers of many species of ducks. Again, away from water, it was very slow birding. It will be interesting to see, if dry conditions continue, what next year's count will show.

Teaching Award Offered

Each year, Mesilla Valley Audubon Society presents the Lorraine Schulte Excellence in Teaching Award, a \$250 award to a teacher in local schools who encourages children to care for the environment.

Applicants are asked to list the objectives of the teacher's program along with a brief description of teaching techniques, program activities and a simple evaluation of the program. The grade level and number of participating students should be included.

Any one can nominate a teacher, kindergarten through grade 12, by completing the brief description of the program. Self-nominations are also accepted.

The deadline for nominations is March 15, 2013, and the award will be presented at the April 17 MVAS meeting.

Applications can be sent to Lorraine Schulte, 1740 Mariposa Dr., Las Cruces, NM. 88001, phone 524-7029.

Electronic Newsletter

Help MVAS save resources by signing up to receive *Roadrunner Ramblings* electronically, instead of in printed form. To sign up, email Nancy Stotz at

nstotz1@comcast.net

As each issue goes to press, you will receive an email with a PDF of the new issue attached. The PDF is also available at our website

www.mvaudubon.org

JOIN NOW!

- National Membership (one year): Join **both** the **National Audubon Society** and **Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for the introductory rate of \$20 (a \$15 savings!). You'll receive both *Audubon Magazine* and *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to National Audubon Society (NAS).
- Chapter Membership (one year): Join just **Mesilla Valley Audubon Society** for \$15. You'll receive *Roadrunner Ramblings*. Make check payable to Mesilla Valley Audubon Society.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

C3ZQ540Z

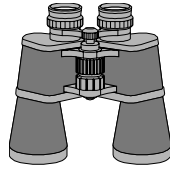
Send this form and your check to:

Membership, MVAS
P.O. Box 1645
Las Cruces, NM 88004

RENEWALS

National Members: NAS will send you renewal notices.

Chapter Members: Check your mailing label. If you see a C followed by a month and year code, you are a Chapter Member. The month and year code indicates the month your membership expires.



Field Trips

Field trips are free and open to the general public. Entry fees to some areas may be required and driving costs are shared. On all field trips wear appropriate clothing and bring water, sunscreen, and binoculars. Announced trips

subject to change. To receive updates and reminders, sign up for the field trip email list by contacting Mark Pendleton at mpndltn@gmail.com

Palomas Marsh. March 23. Join us for an excursion to Palomas Marsh, just upriver a bit from Caballo Reservoir. This is an area that MVAS was instrumental in getting fenced to keep cattle out of a number of years ago. Now there is interest in doing some more work (fence repair, possible expansion of the enclosure etc.) there. This trip is to get an idea of some of what needs to be done there.

We'll meet at the southwest (nearest the Border Patrol station) end of the parking lot of Lowe's on N.Main Street in Las Cruces at 07:00 AM. The plan is to leave at 07:15. Carpooling can be arranged on the spot or amongst folks beforehand. Wear comfortable walking shoes and clothes. A widebrimmed hat and insect repellent plus sun-screen would also be sensible, as would water. We should return to Las Cruces in the early afternoon. Questions? Contact Mark Pendleton at mpndltn@gmail.com or 575.635.8711

Leasburg Dam State Park. April 20.

C.J. Goin will lead this trip to Camp Robledo and/or the Riverside Trail at Leasburg State Park in Radium Springs. If the spring migration is good this year, we may see a number of interesting birds. If it's sparse, then, well, we'll enjoy a pleasant walk!

Bring water and if you want, a snack. The usual advice about comfortable walking clothes and shoes, plus hats, sunscreen and (possibly) insect repellent all apply.

We'll meet at the southwest end (the end closest to the Border Patrol station) of the parking lot of Lowe's on N.Main Street in Las Cruces at 07:00 AM and leave at 07:15. If you're interested in carpooling you can arrange it beforehand or on the spot. We should return to Las Cruces by early afternoon at the latest. Questions? Contact Mark Pendleton at mpndltn@gmail.com or 575.635.8711



MVAS Programs

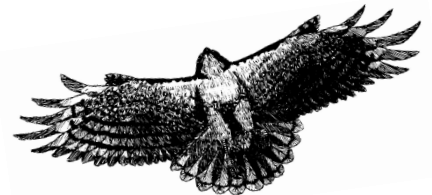
Membership meetings and programs are held each month at the **Village at Northrise, Hallmark Building, 2882 N. Roadrunner Pkwy.** Meetings begin at 7:00 PM. Programs

begin immediately following the business meeting and announcements.

Rekindling MVAS Projects: Palomas Marsh & K-College Outreach. March 20.

Years ago, MVAS spearheaded an effort to protect Palomas Marsh from cattle grazing. As a result, robust wetland and riparian vegetation, including dense stands of cottonwoods and willows, became established. Recently, trespass cattle and fire have damaged the site, and a new MVAS ad hoc committee is forming to explore our options for re-engaging on this project. Sean Barham and Wayne Treers will present some background on the site and initiate discussion about what MVAS can do to further protect Palomas Marsh in the future.

Additionally, CJ Goin, our new Education Chair, will describe some of the new initiatives he's planning to increase our direct outreach to students, K-college. Join us to learn more about these important hands-on projects for our chapter—in between these project discussions, we'll take a break for a fun game or identification challenge.



Steven D. Amato

Scaled Quail: Modeling Habitat for Conservation. April 17.

Presented by Forrest East, winner of MVAS's Richard Bischoff Memorial Scholarship (see p. 3). The goal of Forrest's project is to develop an understanding of the possible effects of brush control, specifically tebuthiuron treatment, on the habitat of scaled quail. Brush control was selected due to its prominent use in the restoration of grasslands, while scaled quail were selected due to a noted recent decline in population. This project is being carried out by developing a systems model for treated scaled quail habitat and validating the model through field measurements.

Richard Bischoff Memorial Scholarship

The MVAS Richard Bischoff Memorial Scholarship was established in 2007 and gave its first \$1000 grant in 2008. Richard joined the board in 2004 and brought many new ideas to the chapter. One of those ideas was the creation of a graduate student scholarship at New Mexico State University. Because of his pivotal role in the scholarship and his many contributions to MVAS, the scholarship is called the Mesilla Valley Audubon's Richard Bischoff Memorial Scholarship.

The scholarship supports graduate student research at New Mexico State University that is consistent with the MVAS mission and promotes natural resource conservation.

Not all recipients study birds. One recipient conducted a study on Banner-tailed Kangaroo Rats to develop a conservation model for the Chihuahuan Desert, while another investigated the life history of the endangered Rio Grande Jumping Mouse. Scholarship recipients have also studied plants, including the history and effects of the encroachment of junipers into riparian habitats in southwestern New Mexico, and the conservation genetics of Rio Grande cottonwoods. In 2009, the winner explored the effect of habitat fragmentation on Burrowing Owl nest productivity in grasslands from South Dakota to Janos, Mexico.

An important part of the scholarship requires the recipient to present their results at a regular MVAS meeting. This allows our members to share in some of the latest research in natural resource conservation. This year's winner will present on April 17 (see Program announcements on page 2).

In order to maintain this scholarship contributions are always needed. Please consider helping MVAS support students engaged in important conservation research at NMSU.

Donations should be sent to:
Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
Scholarship Fund
PO Box 1645
Las Cruces, NM 88004



United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Collection, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh.

MVAS Richard Bischoff Memorial Scholarship Donation Form

Checks should be made out to
Mesilla Valley Audubon Society,
and sent to

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
Scholarship Fund
PO Box 1645
Las Cruces, NM 88004

Thank you.

Please consider donations in the following increments:

___ \$20.00 ___ \$35.00 ___ \$50.00 ___ \$75.00 ___ \$100.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, is a conservation and natural history organization in southern New Mexico that promotes appreciation and conservation of birds, other wildlife, and habitat, through environmental education, issue advocacy, and natural history experiences.

OFFICERS AND BOARD

President		
Vice-president	Gill Sorg	541-0577
Secretary	Laurie Keaton	522-3710
Treasurer	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Past President	David Griffin	640-0029
Board (11-13)	Sean Barham	644-2680
Board (11-13)	Mark Pendleton	635-8711
Board (12-14)	Carol Campbell	640-1660
Board (12-14)	Tim Lawton	522-2056
Board (13-15)	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Board (13-15)	Ken Stinnett	649-3781

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Audubon Adventures	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Audubon Council	Gill Sorg	541-0577
Delegates	Lorraine Schulte	524-7029
Conservation	Bob Tafanelli	526-9380
Education	CJ Goin	202-1354
Field Trips	Mark Pendleton	635-8711
Programs	Jennifer Montoya	526-1320
Membership	vacant	
Membership Records	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Newsletter Editor	Nancy Stotz	521-8087
Publicity	LuAnn Kilday	

Board meetings are held, September through May, on the Thursday before the 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 PM at the Southwest Environmental Center (on the downtown mall). All Audubon members are welcome.

Visit our website at www.mvaudubon.org

Climate Change Expert to Speak

Harvey Stone, climate change expert and author of *Melting Down*, will be giving a talk entitled "Climate Dominoes: Which Way Will They Fall?" on April 18th at 7:00 PM at the Rio Grande Theatre (211 N. Downtown Mall). The talk is free and open to the public, sponsored by the Southwest Environmental Center, City of Las Cruces, and Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Stone will also be leading a Great Conversation on April 17th, and introducing the film *Chasing Ice* on April 19th. Details for these latter 2 events still TBD at press time.

Birding Documentary to Run April 19-25

The Mesilla Valley Film Society will be showing the one-hour documentary *Birders: The Central Park Effect* at the Fountain Theatre from April 19-25. According to the Music Box Films website, this film "reveals the extraordinary array of wild birds who grace Manhattan's celebrated patch of green, and the equally colorful New Yorkers who schedule their lives around the rhythms of migration."

Show times will be 7:30 daily, plus a Saturday matinee at 1:30 PM and a Sunday matinee at 2:30 PM. The cost is \$7 for non-members during regular showings, \$6 for matinees, and \$5 for the Wednesday evening show. Seniors over 60, Students, and Military get in to regular showings for \$6. The Fountain Theatre is at 2469 Calle de Guadalupe in Mesilla (phone 575-524-8287). For a longer description of the film, check out the April calendar on the Coming Soon page of the film society's website: mesillavalleyfilm.org.

Roadrunner Ramblings is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Submissions welcome; please email copy to nstotz1@comcast.net. **Next deadline: April 15.** Printed on recycled paper with soy-based inks by **insta-copy printing**. Image credits: roadrunner, Dale Zimmerman; clip art, IMSI's Master Clips/Master Photos® Collection.

Nonprofit Organization
 US Postage Paid
 Las Cruces, NM 88004
 Permit No. 609

Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 1645
 Las Cruces, NM 88004